



The Honorable Tina Smith
U.S. Senate
720 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20501

November 1, 2019

Dear Senator Smith:

On behalf of the Alzheimer's Association and the Alzheimer's Impact Movement (AIM), including our nationwide network of advocates, thank you for your continued leadership on issues and legislation important to Americans with Alzheimer's and other dementias, and their caregivers. AIM and the Alzheimer's Association are proud to support the Older Americans Social Isolation and Loneliness Act (S.2677), which would create supports and services to allow states to better coordinate and address social isolation and loneliness among America's seniors, including those living with Alzheimer's.

More than 5 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's and, without significant action, nearly 14 million Americans will have Alzheimer's by 2050. Today, another person develops the disease every 65 seconds; by 2050, someone in the United States will develop the disease every 33 seconds. This explosive growth will cause Alzheimer's costs to increase from an estimated \$290 billion in 2019 to more than \$1.1 trillion in 2050 (in 2019 dollars). These mounting costs threaten to bankrupt families, businesses and our health care system. Unfortunately, our work is only growing more urgent.

Social isolation is an issue within the aging community as a whole, and particularly in the Alzheimer's and related dementias community. Studies have found that support groups can decrease social isolation and increase social support, the ability to accept the diagnosis, cope with symptoms, improve quality of life, and enhance family communication (*Alzheimer's Association Dementia Care Practice Recommendations*, 2018). Support programs offered through the National Family Caregiver Support Program and the Home and Community-Based Ombudsmen program can work to decrease social isolation. We appreciate your strong commitment to supporting individuals facing isolation and the bill's inclusion of an advisory council dedicated to identifying the challenges, solutions, and best practices to address social isolation.

Again, we deeply appreciate your continued leadership on behalf of all Americans living with Alzheimer's and other dementias. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues to improve care and support for individuals and families affected by Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. If you have any questions about this or any other legislation, please contact Rachel Conant, Vice President of Federal Affairs, at rconant@alz-aim.org or at 202.638.7121.

Sincerely,

Robert Egge
Chief Public Policy Officer
Executive Vice President, Government Affairs
Alzheimer's Association